

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FRG REPORT ON EAST-WEST LABOR EXCHANGES

REF: (A) NATO 4194, 76, (B) STATE 183909, 76 (ALL NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PAPER ON FRG-WARSAW PACT TRADE
UNION EXCHANGES WHICH FRG REP CIRCULATED AT SEPTEMBER 27
POLADS MEETING.

2. BEGIN TEXT FRG PAPER.
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GERMAN TRADE UNIONS AND THE WORKERS'
ORGANIZATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE.

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTACTS BETWEEN THE GERMAN AND THE
EASTERN-EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS GOES BACK TO THE YEAR 1969.
AT THAT TIME, THE FEDERAL CONGRESS OF THE FEDERATION OF
GERMAN TRADE UNIONS (DGB) DECIDED TO ESTABLISH INFORMATION
CONTACTS WITH THE EASTERN-EUROPEAN UNIONS. AFTER A STEEP
RISE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTIES, THE NUMBER OF
MEETINGS CONSIDERABLY DECLINED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS.
THIS IS EXPLAINED BY THE GERMAN UNIONS BY THE FACT THAT
THE ACCUMULATED DEMAND FOR SUCH CONTACTS IS NOW SATURATED
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AND THAT THE INITIAL EUPHORIA HAS GIVEN WAY TO BUSINESS-
LIKE NORMALIZATION.

2. TRADE UNION CONTACTS TAKE PLACE AT VARIOUS LEVELS:

-- EXCHANGES OF TOP-LEVEL DELEGATIONS OF THE DGB AND SOME
MEMBER UNIONS EVERY YEAR OR EVERY TWO YEARS,

-- EXCHANGES OF SPECIALIZED DELEGATIONS IN THE FIELDS OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY, SOCIAL INSURANCE, VOCATIONAL TRAINING, HUMANIZATION OF THE WORKING WORLD ETC.,

-- INFORMATION VISITS BY TRADE UNION JOURNALISTS.

STRICT RECIPROCITY IS BEING OBSERVED ON THE GERMAN SIDE. THERE IS NO VISIT WITHOUT A RETURN VISIT.

3. THESE EXCHANGES HAVE DEVELOPED INDEPENDENTLY OF HELSINKI. AS FAR AS THE COUNTRIES OF THE EASTERN BLOCK ARE CONCERNED, THEY ARE OF EMINENTLY POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. ADMINISTRATIVE OR MATERIAL DIFFICULTIES HAVE NEVER BEEN AN OBSTACLE FOR THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN ORGANIZING SUCH VISITS. THEY HAVE INVARIABLY FOLLOWED THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO ENTER INTO CLOSE CONTACTS WITH THE GERMAN UNIONS IN ORDER TO GET THEM TO ADOPT A PRO-COMMUNIST LINE.

4. THE GERMAN UNIONS, ON THE OTHER HAND, VIEW THESE EXCHANGES IN A SOBER AND EVEN RESERVED LIGHT. THEY WERE AWARE FROM THE BEGINNING THAT THE WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE EASTERN BLOCK CAN NEVER BE REAL PARTNERS BUT THAT THEY HAVE OTHER TASKS IN A DIFFERENT SOCIAL SYSTEM AND PURSUE DIFFERENT POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL

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GICAL AIMS. FOR THIS REASON, THE GERMAN TRADE UNIONS DO NOT PLAN AN EXTENSION OF THE EXCHANGES. THEY WISH TO KEEP THEM LIMITED AND UNDER CONTROL. THE MEANS USED TO ENSURE THIS ARE THE STRICT APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY AND THE LIMITATION TO BILATERAL CONTACTS.

5. THE DGB REJECTS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FREE TRADE UNIONS (INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS, EUROPEAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION) AND COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONS (WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS). IT REGARDS ESPECIALLY MULTILATERAL CONTACTS AS INVOLVING THE DANGER THAT THE FREE UNIONS MAY BE ABUSED AND UNDERMINED BY THE COMMUNISTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF A COMMUNIST-INSPIRED "UNITY OF ACTION OF THE WORKING CLASS".

6. IN SPITE OF ALL THE REALISM WITH WHICH THE GERMAN UNIONS VIEW THE EXCHANGES WITH EASTERN EUROPE, THEY BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE THEIR VALUE WHICH CAN, HOWEVER, ONLY BECOME FULLY EFFECTIVE BY A PERMANENT DIALOGUE OF LONG DURATION.

7. THE CONTACTS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES VARY IN

INTENSITY. RELATIONS ARE BEST WITH POLAND AND HUNGARY,
WHILE THOSE WITH THE OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE EASTERN BLOCK
DO NOT EXCEED THE LIMITS OF FORMALITY.
END TEXT. BENNETT

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